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ABSTRACT

Because research data indicate a positive correlation between verbal disabilities and reading retardation, a study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of an integrative approach to language development through the reading curriculum over more traditional therapy approaches. Students from three third grade elementary school classrooms were screened using a battery of selected language and cognitive assessment devices. Ten children referred for having school-related difficulties were tested and found to have significant language delays. Five of these children were assigned to an experimental group and given language therapy as part of their reading program. Five were assigned to a control group and taught traditional reading. Guidelines for the teacher in the experimental condition included using simplified instructions, providing moral support and verbal cues, and providing children with plenty of opportunities for achieving success. At the end of one semester, both groups were tested using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Test of Auditory Comprehension of Language. The results indicated that students exposed to language therapy via their reading lessons improved their scores significantly on the two language comprehension tests. Students who received traditional reading and language intervention had less significant gains on these two measures. (HTH)

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# INTEGRATING LANGUAGE IN THE READING CURRICULUM

Beverly A. Doyle

The positive relationship has been supported between verbal disabilities and reading retardation in studies by Warrington and Kinsbourne (1967). They compared the frequency and magnitude of verbal and performance scale discrepancies on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for children of seventy-six retarded readers ages 7 t 15. Their data indicated that the majority of children with reading or spelling deficits demonstrated verbal deficits on the WISC. In addition, they looked at the proportion of children with discrepancies between verbal and performance scores of 20 or more points. Those with lower verbal scores had a significantly larger number of retarded readers in the group.

Educators as well as speech pathologists are becoming increasingly aware of the need to involve speech and language as a part of the regular classroom program (Dickering and Kaebler [1978], Simon [1975], Millard [1972], Jones [1972], England [1973], Schuckers [1975], and Andrews and Brabson [1977]). As a result of the data collected, and the research available, integrating language development through the reading curriculum was attempted. Activities to enhance listening skills, vocabulary development, and overall auditory comprehension of language and verbal expression were included as part of the reading lesson.

To determine the effectiveness of an integrative approach to language development through the reading curriculum over more traditional therapy approaches, the following approach was implemented.

Students from third-grade classrooms in three elementary schools in the Des Moines Public School System were initially screened using a battery of selected language and cognitive assessment devices. These assessments included: the verbal section from the Wechsler Intelligence Scale in Children-Revised, the Test of Language Development, the Concept Utilization Test, the Oral Language Sentence

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Imitation Screening and Diagnostic Tests, and the Wide Range Achievement Test.

A pilot project was carried out with a group of ten children who were referred for having school related difficulties. These children were tested, and found to have significant language delays. Five of these children were assigned to an experimental group and given language therapy as part of their reading program. Five were assigned to a control group and taught reading in the traditional way. In addition, these children received language therapy from the speech and language therapist 30 minutes per day.

The procedure for the experimentai group was as follows:

1. Determine language strengths and weaknesses for each child.
2. Design behavioral objectives for each child.
3. Integrate these objectives in the reading lesson via exercises and worksheets.
4. Make necessary classroom materials.
5. Review these with the classroom teacher.

The Lippincott Reading Program was being used in the school. Samples of the reading and language lessons prepared are included in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

In addition to this procedure, these general guidelines were given to the classroom teacher:

1. Use simplified instructions which the children can understand.
2. Use visual cues coupled with the verbal counterpart whenever possible.
3. Provide opportunities and time for verbal responses.
4. Provide moral support and verbal cues whenever possible. For example, give the child a choice of words to choose from when answering a question.
5. Initially, accept short concrete answers from children. Long-range goals involve the development of more complex language.
6. Rephrase the children's responses into more concise, descriptive words when necessary. This can be done by modeling a longer phrase or sentence after the child has responded.
7. Encourage limitation of the teacher's use of correct grammatical language.
8. Provide the children with plenty of opportunities for achieving success.

The experimental procedure was implemented for one semester. At the end of the semester, students were post-tested. Table 4 includes a comparison of students' scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Test of Auditory Comprehension of Language.

Results of this pilot project indicate that students exposed to language therapy via their reading lessons improved their scores on two language comprehension tests significantly over the semester. Students who had traditional reading and language intervention had less significant gains on these two measures.

Implications of this project include further study of this approach with more students to substantiate its effectiveness. Utilizing the consultation model allows resource people to reach more students via a classroom teacher. In addition, teachers become more aware of the need to include language enrichment activities in all curricular areas, and of the importance which language plays in the academic and social success of the student.

TABLE 1
BASIC READING - BOOK B (THURSDAY)

Time for Bed

A. Understanding Verbal Descriptions
   1. What is a tool, has a pointed end and long handle?
   2. What is made of canvas, is green, and can be put up with rope to sleep in?
   3. What is made of wool material and can be put on a bed to keep you warm at night?

B. Categorization
   1. Is a spade a piece of furniture or a tool?
   2. A lamp and a bed are both _____.
   3. Is Farmer Tom a man or a woman?

C. Cause and Effect
   1. What would have happened if Farmer Tom had not put out the fire?
   2. Why was the bed raised on blocks?
   3. What might happen if Mike and Bill did not go to bed at nine?

D. Problem-Solving
   What would you do if you saw a man looking in your bedroom window?

E. Predicting Outcomes
   What would happen if a ten you were sleeping in caught on fire?

F. Divergent Thinking
   List all the ways that you might put out a fire.

TABLE 2
BASIC READING - BOOK B (TUESDAY)

The Lost Cow

A. Vocabulary Development
   1. What is a rope?
   2. What does braided mean?
   3. What is a corral?
   4. What is a saddle?
   5. What does stole mean?

B. Word Usage
   1. Carlos Calero _____ on a horse.
   2. He went to find a lost _____.
   3. Carlos _____ a rope on his saddle.
   4. Carlos spun his rope _____.
   5. The _____ had taken Carlos' cow.

C. Understanding Pictures
   Turn to page 77 in the book and ask the children to describe what is happening in the picture.

D. Identifying Nonsense
   1. Carlos Calero rode his cow.
   2. Carlos captured the cow with his gun.
   3. The man who stole the cow was good.
   4. The cow galloped back home.

E. Practice Speaking in Sentences
   1. Carlos and his horse _____.
   2. The cow _____.
   3. Carlos wanted to _____.
   4. The man _____.

F. Following Verbal Directions
   1. Point to the horse, the cow tracks, and the pool of water. (p. 73)
   2. Point to the rope, the horse, and the old man. (p. 76)

Week of April 30

TABLE 3
BASIC READING - BOOK B (THURSDAY)

The Lost Cow

A. Understanding Verbal Directions
   1. What is long, can bend, and is prickly to touch?
   2. What animal do we get meat from and says moo?
   3. What animal has a mane, tail, and gallops?

B. Categorization
   1. Name the animals that are in the story.
   2. Name the people who are in the story.
   3. Do you think the man is old or young?

C. Cause and Effect
   1. What might have happened if it had gotten dark while Carlos was out searching for the cow?
   2. What might happen if you steal something that doesn't belong to you?
   3. What might have happened if Carlos did not rope the cow?

D. Problem-Solving
   What would you do if you saw someone steal something that belonged to you?

E. Predicting Outcomes
   What might have happened if the ground was not damp so the cow's footprints could be seen?

F. Divergent Thinking
   Mention all the things you can do with a rope.

TABLE 4
SCORES ON THE PEABODY PICTURE VOCABULARY TEST
AND THE TEST OF AUDITORY COMPREHENSION OF LANGUAGE

\+ indicates a significant improvement in scores after 8 weeks of therapy

\- indicates no significant improvement in scores after 8 weeks of therapy

Experimental Group - Integrative Approach to Language Therapy

| | PPVT | TACL |
|---|---|---|
| Child 1 | + | + |
| 2 | + | + |
| 3 | + | + |
| 4 | + | + |
| 5 | - | + |

Control Group - Traditional Therapy Approach

| | PPVT | TACL |
|---|---|---|
| Child 1 | + | + |
| 2 | - | + |
| 3 | + | - |
| 4 | - | - |
| 5 | + | - |

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